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Date: Oct 17, 2018

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PRIORITY ZYUW RUEHBUA1703 0761936

P 171932Z MAR 83

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ SECTION 01 OF 02 BUENOS AIRES AR

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SUBJ: ARGENTINA/ARGENTINE AIR FORCE

ATTITUDE HARDENING/(U)

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USC 424

1. (U) CTRY: ARGENTINA (AR)

(U) IR NO:

3. (U) TITLE: ARGENTINE AIR FORCE ATTITUDE HARDENING

4. (U) DATE OF INFO: 830314/15

5. (U) ORIG:

6. (U) REQ REFS: K-3E1-00054, Z-DI3-AR001, Z-DI3-AR030

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8. ~~(C/NOFORN)~~ SUMMARY: IN WHAT APPEARS TO BE A SIGNIFICANT HARDENING OF THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE U.S., THE ARGAF SEES THE CURRENT POSSIBILITY OF LIFTING HUMPHREY-KENNEDY RESTRICTIONS ON ARMS SALES AND TRAINING AS THE FINAL EFFORT BEFORE MAKING SIGNIFICANT POLICY DECISIONS WHICH WILL INCLUDE SOVIET SOURCE WEAPONS. IN AS MUCH AS CURRENT DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS HAVE FAILED TO MOVE THE UK TO THE NEGOTIATING TABLE, ARGAF LOGIC DICTATES THAT THEY MUST FORCE THE ISSUE FROM A POSITION OF INCREASED DIPLOMATIC AND MILITARY STRENGTH. IF THE U.S. POSITION DOES NOT CHANGE IN THE VERY NEAR TERM, NEW AND SIGNIFICANT ACQUISITIONS WILL BE MADE WITH THE CLEAR IMPLICATION THAT THE USSR WILL BE A MAJOR SOURCE. BASED ON RECENT ARGENTINE FOREIGN POLICY STATEMENTS, AND THE INCREASINGLY HARD-LINED NATIONALIST STANCE OF THE ARGAF, THERE IS A VERY STRONG POSSIBILITY THAT THE ARGAF IS "CRYING RUSSIAN WOLF" FOR REAL THIS TIME.

9A. (U) DETAILS:

1. ~~(C/NOFORN)~~ DURING TWO SEPARATE CONVERSATIONS WITH SOURCE, BOTH THE AIRA AND A/AIRA WERE TOLD, IN UNUSUALLY STRAIGHTFORWARD LANGUAGE, THAT THE NEED FOR CERTIFICATION OF ARGENTINA UNDER HUMPHREY-KENNEDY AMENDMENT IS NOW AT A VERY CRITICAL STAGE. IN SO FAR AS THE ARGAF IS CONCERNED, FAILURE TO CERTIFY OR AN EXTENDED DELAY IN CERTIFICATION WILL RESULT IN THE FINAL RUPTURE OF WHAT REMAINS OF ARGAF-USAF RELATIONS. ADDITIONALLY, ANY UNUSUAL

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RESTRICTIONS OR CONDITIONS TO ARGAF ACQUISITIONS AFTER A CERTIFICATION WOULD BE UNACCEPTABLE TO THE CURRENT LEADERSHIP.

2. ~~(C/NOFORN)~~ SOURCE STATED THAT CERTIFICATION WOULD HELP RESOLVE TWO OVERPOWERING ISSUES NOW FACING THE ARGAF. FIRST, CERTIFICATION PRIOR TO THE AR ELECTIONS, SCHEDULED FOR 831030, WOULD HELP REMOVE A VERY SERIOUS OBSTACLE TO THE OUTGOING MILITARY GOVERNMENT AND ALLOW FOR A SMOOTHER TRANSITION TO CIVILIAN RULE. AS LONG AS THE ISSUE OF PAST HUMAN RIGHTS TRAUMA (WHICH IS, IN GREAT PART, FORMALLY REPRESENTED BY HUMPHREY-KENNEDY) HANGS OVER THE CURRENT MILITARY TRANSITION GOVERNMENT, THEIR FLEXIBILITY AND ABILITY TO COMPROMISE WITH THE FUTURE CIVILIAN LEADERSHIP IS LIMITED.

3. ~~(C/NOFORN)~~ THE SECOND AND PERHAPS MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE TO BE AFFECTED BY CERTIFICATION IS THE CURRENT AND FUTURE STATUS OF THE UK-AR CONFLICT. ACCORDING TO SOURCE, ARGAF LOGIC DICTATES THAT INASMUCH AS CURRENT DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS INDICATE LITTLE CHANCE OF MOVING THE UK TO NEGOTIATIONS AND INASMUCH AS THE U.S. IS UNABLE OR UNWILLING TO PRESSURE LONDON TO DO SO, THEN AR MUST APPLY THE PRESSURE ITSELF, DEALING FROM A POSITION OF INCREASED MILITARY STRENGTH AND SUPPORTED DIPLOMATICALLY BY AS MANY NATIONS AS POSSIBLE, REGARDLESS OF THEIR RELATIVE POWER OR IDEOLOGY. (AN OBVIOUS REFERENCE TO RECENT EVENTS IN THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT CONFERENCE IN NEW DELHI).

4. ~~(C/NOFORN)~~ SOURCE CONTINUED (IN UNCHARACTERISTICALLY BLUNT EMOTIONAL LANGUAGE) THAT WHAT REMAINS OF THE US-ARGAF RELATIONS IS ON THE VERGE OF RUPTURE. HE STATED THAT FAILURE OF CERTIFICATION EFFORTS WILL LEAD TO ARMS ACQUISITIONS FROM THE USSR. THE ARGAF CANNOT FACE THE UK WITH WHAT REMAINS AFTER THE WAR, AND THEY INTEND TO MOVE QUICKLY TO FURTHER RE-EQUIP, STRENGTHEN, AND MODERNIZE THE FORCE. (b)(3):10 USC 424 THAT TIME IS BT

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ SECTION 02 OF 02 BUENOS AIRES AR 010703

RUNNING OUT AND IF A SOVIET GAIN IS TO BE AVOIDED, THE U.S.
MUST ACT DECISIVELY NOW. SOURCE WAS EMPHATIC IN THAT [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] THIS WARNING WAS FOR REAL AND MAJOR ARGAF
POLICY DECISIONS WERE IMMINENT.

5. ~~(C/NOFORN)~~ AS A FURTHER ARGUMENT [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] DURING THE PAST THREE YEARS HE HAD
ALWAYS BEEN CANDID IN HIS ASSESSMENTS OF US-AR RELATIONS
DURING OUR DISCUSSIONS. HE EMPHASIZED HE WAS DOING
SO NOW. ADDITIONALLY, HE REMINDED A/AIRA THAT HE HAD
CONSISTENTLY REASSURED [REDACTED] ON THE SAFETY OF U.S. PERSONNEL
IN ARGENTINA. NOW, HOWEVER, HE COULD NO LONGER BE AS
CONFIDENT DUE TO WHAT SOURCE TERMED A RAPIDLY DEVELOPING
ANTI-U.S. SENTIMENT IN THE ARGENTINE (K907)-3. THE LATTER
POINT, HOWEVER, WAS NOT MADE TO THE AIRA IN CONNECTION
WITH THE DISCUSSIONS ON NEED FOR CERTIFICATION.

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9B. (U) ORIG CMTS:

1. ~~(C/NOFORN)~~ IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE THE ARGAF IS EMPLOYING
A "FULL COURT PRESS" TO FORCE THE ISSUE OF CERTIFICATION
WITH THE U.S. AND TO COUNTER APPARENT STRONG UK OBJECTIMNS.
THEY ARE CERTAINLY AWARE THAT THE THREAT OF "BUY SOVIET"
DOES GARNER SOME ATTENTION IN USG CIRCLES.

2. ~~(C/NOFORN)~~ UNFORTUNATELY, CIRCUMSTANCES HAVE CHANGED
SIGNIFICANTLY WITHIN THE PAST YEAR AND, MORE SO, WITHIN
THE PAST FEW WEEKS. THE ARGAF APPEARS TO BE THE MOST
ACTIVE AND VOCAL PROPONENT OF A HARDLINE NATIONALIST,
INDEPENDENT POLICY. IT IS RUMORED THAT BRIGADIER MAYOR
((INSUA)), ARGAF COS, ACCOMPANIED PRESIDENT ((BIGNONE))

ON HIS RECENT VISIT TO THE NON-ALIGNED CONFERENCE AND THAT
THE ARGAF WAS KEY TO THE DECISION TO MORE CLOSELY ALIGN
ARGENTINA WITH THAT MOVEMENT DESPITE THE IDEOLOGY AND
POLICIES OF SOME OF ITS MEMBERS.

3. ~~(C/NOFORN)~~ THE ARGAF OBVIOUSLY REALIZES THAT ITS
NORMAL SOURCES OF ARMS AND TRAINING (I.E. EUROPE AND THE
U.S.) WILL CONTINUE TO BE UNRELIABLE AS LONG AS THE
POSSIBILITY OF A UK-AR CONFLICT EXISTS. ARGENTINA'S RECENT
STATEMENTS AND ACTIONS IN THE NAM HAVE STRAINED VRELATIONS
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ISRAEL AND SOUTH AFRICA, OVOE OF WHICH IS NOW A
PRIMARY WEAPONS SOURCE. THE ALTERNATIVE IS OBVIOUS.

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SUBJ: [REDACTED] ARGENTINA/ARGENTINE AIR FORCE
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10. (U) PROJ NO: N/A
11. (U) COLL MGMT CODES: AH
12. (U) SPEC INST: DIBC NO
13. (U) PREP BY:

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14. (U) APP BY:
15. (U) REQ EVAL: YES; REL TO: NONE
16. (U) ENCL: N/A
17. (U) DIST BY ORIG: N/A

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